



## Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties

# English

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## Introduction

### What is the purpose of this guidance?

This guidance supports the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. It draws on effective practice across a range of schools and can be used in mainstream and special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It also provides support to the range of services that work with these schools.

The guidance can be used with the school's own material, the national curriculum and the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics to:

- confirm the statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils and build on the principles of inclusion set out in the national curriculum
- help schools develop an inclusive curriculum by:
  - setting suitable learning challenges
  - responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
  - including all learners by overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment
- provide a stimulus to revisit and revise existing schemes of work or a basis to develop new ones.

### Who are the pupils?

The guidance relates to all pupils aged between 5 and 16 who have learning difficulties, regardless of factors such as their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background or gender, or the extent of their other difficulties. This includes pupils who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4. (These pupils are usually described as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.) This also includes pupils with learning difficulties who may be working at age-related expectations in some subjects but are well below this in others. (These pupils, along with those with other significant difficulties, are often described as having moderate learning difficulties.)

### Who is the guidance for?

The guidance supports the work of a range of adults who are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. This includes class teachers, subject coordinators, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), senior managers, teaching assistants, parents,

carers, governors, therapists, local authority and advisory support services, and professionals from health, social services and the voluntary sector. Throughout these materials, the term 'staff' is used to refer to all those concerned with the education of these pupils.

## What is in the guidance?

The guidance contains:

- support on developing and planning the curriculum
- support on developing skills across the curriculum
- subject materials on planning, teaching and assessing each national curriculum subject; religious education (RE); and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. These include descriptions of pupils' attainment showing progress up to level 1 of the national curriculum, which can be used to recognise attainment and structure teaching.

## What are the subject materials?

The subject materials support staff in planning appropriate learning opportunities. The materials do not represent a separate curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or an alternative to the national curriculum. They demonstrate a process for developing access to the national curriculum and support staff in developing their own curriculum to respond to the needs of their pupils at each key stage. The materials offer one approach to meeting this challenge. Schools may already have effective structures or may wish to adopt different approaches.

The materials identify learning opportunities relevant to each subject. They demonstrate appropriate learning across the scope of the national curriculum from the earliest levels. They are intended to increase schools' confidence in their capacity to provide appropriate access to the national curriculum.

A common framework for these materials has been used. In each subject, appropriate learning for pupils with diverse needs at each key stage has been identified. Those aspects of the programmes of study that may create particular difficulties are also discussed, as well as aspects that may be unsuitable at a particular key stage. The suggested activities can be used to develop ideas for relevant, accessible and challenging experiences in curriculum plans.

## Responding to pupils' needs when teaching English

### The importance of English to pupils with learning difficulties

Learning English encompasses all aspects of communication – non-verbal, verbal and written. Work in English promotes learning across the curriculum and underpins pupils' achievements and participation in all aspects of their lives.

In particular, English offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

- develop the ability to respond, to listen and to understand
- interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of social situations
- make choices, obtain information, question and be actively involved in decision making
- develop creativity and imagination
- have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience.

In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in English by:

- using a wide variety of activities, which are age-related, especially where aspects of the programmes of study are revisited at later key stages
- increasing engagement in, and the quality of, a range of literature and communication activities
- a widening of horizons and participation from the immediate social circles of family and school, to an extended participation in the local and wider community
- adapting to different circumstances and contexts with independence and confidence
- acquiring an increasing range of vocabulary, from the names of everyday objects, events and people, to vocabulary used across the curriculum and related to the wider community.

## Modifying the English programmes of study

The statutory inclusion statement of the national curriculum requires staff to modify the programmes of study to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. Staff should teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge their pupils' abilities.

Staff can modify the English programmes of study for pupils with learning difficulties by:

- choosing material from earlier key stages
- aiming to maintain, reinforce, consolidate and generalise learning, as well as introducing new knowledge, skills and understanding
- using the programmes of study as a resource, or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and needs of pupils
- focusing on one aspect, or a limited number of aspects, of the age-related programmes of study.

The national curriculum emphasises the importance of interrelating speaking and listening, reading and writing and of providing an integrated curriculum. The direct teaching of speaking and listening, reading and writing skills is also important for all pupils.

This guidance complements the English national curriculum programmes of study and the work of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). It also draws on the *Practice guidance for the early years foundation stage* (DCSF00266-2008BKT-EN). and the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy. The learning objectives of the frameworks for teaching literacy and English in the Primary and Secondary National Strategies can also be used to support planning. These materials, together with the national curriculum breadth of study, provide the context for coverage and the development of skills at an appropriate level for each pupil.

## Speaking and listening

In the broadest interpretation, speaking and listening encompass all forms of communicative responses and intent. Communication may include one or more of the following:

- the use of body movements, *for example, whole body movements (such as turning towards or away), eye gaze, facial expressions (such as smiling or grimacing), and pointing using eye, head, foot, fists or fingers*

- gestures, *for example, clapping, waving and reaching*, and formalised signs
- communication aids, *for example, objects of reference, photographs, pictures, symbols and electronic communicators*
- vocalisation and speech.

Staff working with pupils at different key stages may find it helpful to refer to the 'speaking', 'speaking and presenting', 'listening and responding' and 'group discussion and interaction' strands in the Primary and Secondary National Strategy frameworks for teaching literacy and English. In addition, the Primary and Secondary frameworks contain ideas about teaching drama, role-play and performance, all of which may be freely adapted for a range of pupils.

### **Speaking**

To encourage pupils to express their likes, dislikes, feelings, emotions and preferences for different audiences, it is important to develop vocalisation, whether spontaneous or imitative, and/or the use of a range of communicative movements and gestures. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- participate in social routines and to communicate in a widening range of situations
- develop oral motor skills to support the development of speech, *for example, blowing, sucking, licking and humming*
- produce sequences of intonated sounds and words
- use a widening range of vocabulary
- use an appropriate form of communication for a range of purposes, *for example, to request, instruct, question, share information, organise actions and thoughts*
- vary the tone and volume of their voices in different situations and then monitor their use of volume, tone and pitch
- use appropriate facial expressions.



## Listening and responding

It is important for pupils to develop the ability to attend, listen and discriminate between contrasting stimuli, *for example, auditory, visual, tactile and olfactory*. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- listen and develop auditory memory, *for example, responding to sounds in the environment or to the cessation of sound, attending to adult imitation of their own sounds, responding to their own name, engaging in imitation and turn-taking activities, responding appropriately to specific sounds, words and phrases and exploring language in different contexts*
- maintain and develop concentration, *for example, focusing on an activity, tracking a sound or movement, copying sequences of sounds, listening and attending to rhymes, stories and simple recounts linked to sensory cues, sustaining attention in different activities, and responding to instructions.*

## Group discussion and interaction

It is important to develop the ability to respond to the communication of others and to develop joint attention in both one-to-one and group situations. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- take turns in a range of situations and for a variety of purposes, *for example, cooperating with others in a shared task, actively contributing to interactions, and maintaining interaction through more than one turn*
- initiate communication, *for example, through smiling, making eye contact, reaching out, touching, or drawing attention to an object or event of interest.*

## Drama

Drama provides a rich and motivating stimulus to develop a wide range of speaking and listening skills in novel, exciting and real-life situations, including involvement in the community. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to develop:

- a sense of self and of their role in different social groups
- anticipation and recall
- listening, concentration and attention skills
- the ability to choose, justify and discriminate between decisions

- the confidence to experiment and try new ideas where there is no right or wrong answer
- cooperation, tolerance and willingness to work with others
- self-discipline and self-confidence and involvement in the community.

### ***Standard English and language variation***

Pupils with learning difficulties may need to have expressive language modelled for them. They may need structured support to understand and use the different elements in speech and to progress from the use of single words to two or more elements. Support may include the use and understanding of how other parts of speech, *such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions*, are used and combined in different ways so that the meaning is clear. Listening to and being aware of how colloquial English and local spoken dialect can differ from standard English is important, even for pupils who may not develop speech. Pupils may be taught about how language varies and may experience varieties of expressive language associated with different situations. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- use different facial expressions and body posture in formal and informal situations
- use appropriate structures to refer to the present, *for example, two to three element combinations*, including statements, negatives, questions, commands or the use of adjectives, prepositions and determiners, *for example, 'my coat'*
- apply a familiar word to a range of others, *for example, 'more gravy', 'more books'*
- use a range of structures, *such as plurals and pronouns* and refer to activities and experiences in the past and the future
- link clauses with connectives, *for example, 'and'*
- be aware of differences between written forms and verbal and non-verbal communication systems
- discriminate between, and make active choices about, formal and informal vocabulary in different situations, *for example, phrases on a communication aid, different tones of voice, different signs*
- develop an understanding of how language varies over time, and the influences on language, *for example, peer group colloquialisms, media and advertising.*

## Reading

For pupils with learning difficulties, reading may be interpreted as any activity that leads to the derivation of meanings from visual or tactile representations, *for example, objects, pictures, symbols or written words*. They may be accessed visually, aurally or through touch, *for example, looking at objects, pictures, symbols or words, feeling objects of reference, looking and listening to CD-ROMs or computer programs, listening to an adult reading aloud or an audio recording*.

### **Reading strategies**

Pupils may be taught a range of strategies to enjoy, to access and to understand different types of symbolic representations, *for example, objects of reference, pictures, symbols and text or combinations of these*.

### **Phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge**

It is important to develop every pupil's ability to listen and to attend. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- locate, track and sequence sounds
- sustain attention in a listening activity
- recognise that sounds and words can relate to people, situations, actions and objects
- discriminate between different sounds, words and phrases
- blend sounds for reading and segment them for spelling
- develop a knowledge of grapheme and phoneme correspondences.

### **Word recognition and symbolic knowledge**

It is important to develop the ability to attend to objects, patterns, pictures, symbols and words. Pupils can be encouraged to link these to people, situations, objects and actions and to learn how they can provide cues to an activity and to make choices. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- discriminate between different representations
- distinguish between text and illustrations
- match and identify a range of familiar representations, *for example, signs, symbols and words of personal importance, high-frequency words, content words or phrases from familiar books or reading schemes, social and environmental vocabulary, cross-curricular and subject-specific vocabulary*.

### ***Grammatical awareness***

Grammatical awareness will develop from, and support, pupils' ability to use and understand the different elements of speech, *for example, how nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions are used and combined in different ways so that meaning is clear*. Reading may provide a visual prompt to support pupils who have difficulties with syntax or who use telegraphic speech in appropriate language structures. To develop pupils' reading comprehension, it is important to develop their understanding of words, sentences and whole texts and the ways in which these are selected, combined and sequenced. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- recognise patterns and continue a pattern of objects or symbols
- sequence objects, symbols and words from left to right, and understand that they need to be accessed in that way to make sense
- develop the concept of beginnings and ends, *for example, of a story, an information text, a sentence or a word*
- recognise when the order of an object, picture, symbol or word sequence has been changed and how such changes can alter meanings.

### ***Contextual understanding***

The development of pupils' knowledge of object permanence will support the understanding of cues and signals linked to reading activities, and the ability to consider the text as a whole. Contextual understanding will be built upon knowledge, skills and understanding developed in speaking and listening activities, *for example, pupils' appropriate responses to specific sounds, words and phrases, their use and understanding of a developing vocabulary and their exploration of language used across different contexts*. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- become familiar with, and anticipate, routines linked to reading activities and the content of different texts, *for example, through story sacks, handling objects linked to information texts; a mood created within the classroom before reading a particular type of story using lights, music and sound effects to prepare for a scary story or the opening of a book providing the cue that an adult is about to read aloud*

- make connections between different parts of a text, *for example, how stories begin and end, the sequence of stories, the order of a recipe, what has been included and omitted in information writing*
- predict what happens next in a story or what a book might be about
- apply knowledge gained from experience of other texts.

### **Reading for information**

It is important to develop the ability to recognise and to obtain information from objects, photographs, pictures, symbols and text.

Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- access information from a wide variety of sources, *for example, objects of reference, pictures and photographs, reference books, tables, charts, maps, diagrams, dictionaries, CD-ROMs, audio recordings, internet sites*
- choose, select and handle books with care and use a library
- understand terms about books and print and use them correctly, *for example, cover, beginning, end, page, line, word, letter, title*
- recognise and name different types of non-fiction and non-literary texts and understand their uses, *for example, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, cookery books, atlases, diaries, telephone directories, leaflets, letters*
- identify, understand, and use subject-specific and specialist vocabularies
- use some of the organisational features of non-fiction texts to find information, *for example, headings, captions, illustrations, contents, index and chapters*
- identify facts and opinions and compare information from different texts.

### **Literature**

A response to, and an understanding of, literature will initially be accessed through attending to a familiar voice reading aloud and to objects, pictures and varied sensory stimuli linked to a story. It is important to develop pupils' understanding of fiction, poetry and drama. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- attend and respond to the sound, rhythm and mood of a variety of literary texts

- respond in different ways to what they have read or heard, *for example, through movement, mime, role play, art, music and shared writing activities*
- develop a wide understanding and use of vocabulary linked to text, supported where appropriate by objects, pictures, symbols and multi-sensory resources
- respond to, identify and describe characters, events, settings and emotions in fiction texts
- contribute to a shared discussion, making reference to the characters and plot and indicating personal preferences
- compare the work of the same and different writers, identifying similarities and differences, *for example, compare two poems by the same poet; compare two pieces of writing on the same theme, but in different styles or from different cultural traditions*
- respond to, and be aware of, the different uses of language and subject matter from different traditions.

### Writing

Writing may be interpreted as any activity that communicates and records events, experiences, information, thoughts and feelings. This may be in stories, scripts, poetry, personal writing or functional writing, *for example, lists, instructions*. Writing presents a considerable challenge for many pupils with learning difficulties. The most appropriate form of recording should be selected according to pupils' needs, *for example, using objects, pictures, photographs, symbols and text; own name, picture, letter and word stamps; working with an adult as a scribe; or a combination of these*. All relevant ICT and communication aids should be used to support and foster writing, including composition through dictation, *for example, to an audio recorder, an adult scribe or voice-activated software*, and the use of computers in addition to handwriting. Technology can also be used for listening to what the pupils have written themselves or what others have written.

### Composition

It is important to provide pupils with the tools to develop the skills to record information in a variety of ways. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- record events, experiences and information, *for example, making simple books that reflect personal interests*

- link objects, pictures, words and symbols to convey meanings
- select and choose an appropriate vocabulary
- use the experience of stories, poems and simple recounts as a basis for shared and independent writing, *for example, re-telling, substituting and extending*
- write in different styles, *for example, captions, lists, letters, address labels, action plans for progress files or application forms for work experience*
- vary their writing for different purposes and different readers.

### ***Planning and drafting***

Pupils with learning difficulties may work with staff and peers on planning and drafting activities. It is important to develop the ability to select and assemble objects, photographs, pictures, symbols and words appropriate to the activity. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- trace, overwrite, copy and write familiar words and phrases that have been generated in response to a starting point
- plan, note and develop initial ideas, *for example, using objects, pictures or photographs as a starting point for their work; writing frames, ideas webs, lists, concept maps, network diagrams and sign-posting systems*
- draft and develop ideas from a plan into a structured written text, *for example, through working with an adult as a scribe, copying dictated words and text, selecting symbols, words or sentences or a combination of them on a switch-operated computer program*
- revise, change and improve drafts, *for example, through working individually with an adult or in a shared writing group and discussing and reviewing the written text, or by reading their own work aloud, underlining words that could be substituted by a more interesting vocabulary, cutting and pasting work on a word processor.*

### ***Spelling and punctuation***

Work on punctuation will be supported by activities that highlight the importance of making sense of what is read and the needs of the reader. It needs to be closely allied to the development of grammatical awareness. Work on spelling will be supported by activities that highlight the similarities and differences between sounds, words and letters. The latter will need to be closely allied to phonemic awareness and phonic

knowledge. Knowledge, skills and understanding should be developed as outlined in the national curriculum programmes of study and the learning objectives in the frameworks for teaching literacy and English in the Primary and Secondary National Strategies.

### ***Handwriting and presentation***

It is important to provide extensive opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of, and attention to, their hands and fingers, and the ability to use them with increasing control, *for example, bringing two objects together, transferring objects from hand to hand, and picking up small objects using a pincer grasp*. Pupils can experiment with different media, and should be encouraged to use a range of writing materials to make marks and to develop pencil control and handwriting skills. For many pupils with learning difficulties, presentation skills will be best supported by ICT. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- be aware of, attend to and manipulate switches, *for example, through adult prompts and guidance, using different body parts, such as head and foot*
- develop hand/eye coordination, *for example, through left to right tracking activities; a range of fine motor activities; exploring patterns, circular movements and letter shapes and tracing, overwriting, copying and/or forming shapes and letters; colouring within a defined outline; developing and practising handwriting, ensuring correct letter formation, orientation and proportion*
- take pride in their work
- recognise and understand how to set out their work, how to check that it is neat and clear, and how to revise it and amend mistakes.

### ***Standard English and language structure***

Standard English and language structure will develop from, and support, a pupil's ability to use and understand the different elements in speaking and listening activities, *for example, how nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions and other parts of speech are used and combined to make meanings clear*. Shared writing activities may support pupils who have difficulties with syntax or who use telegrammatic speech in appropriate language structures. It will also be closely linked to work on grammatical awareness in reading. It is important that pupils understand that pictures, symbols and written words need to be ordered correctly and that an



appropriate vocabulary is crucial to meaning. Teaching this aspect across key stages may help pupils to:

- select an appropriate vocabulary
- order pictures, symbols and words and link them in sentences and sequences of sentences
- recognise the functions of different words, *for example, nouns, verbs, adjectives*, and use them appropriately by linking them in sentences and sequences of sentences
- be aware of how written English varies in degrees of formality, depending on the intended readers, relationships and contexts.

### Improving access to the English curriculum

Staff can make English more accessible by:

- ensuring that communication opportunities are of a high quality and enjoyable, relevant and motivating
- providing access to appropriate ICT to support and develop pupils' work
- providing opportunities for pupils to communicate through the most appropriate means or by a combination of means, *for example, body movements; eye gaze; facial expression; gestures including clapping, waving, pointing and signing; finger spelling; photographs; pictures and symbols; objects and objects of reference; electronic communication aids and switches*
- supporting their own speech and prompting pupil responses in shared reading and writing activities and in discussion work through signs, symbols, visual prompts and through appropriate models to support pupils' responses
- encouraging interaction with other pupils, in addition to interaction with staff
- using materials and resources which pupils can access through sight, touch, sound, taste or smell, *for example, tactile books, story sacks and boxes, audio recordings*
- providing sensitive and thoughtful adult support, *for example, correct positioning so that pupils can make purposeful movements or focus on an activity; coactive exploration; sensitive interpretation of the meaning and purpose of communication*

- allowing time for pupils to settle and be familiar with their environment, and to respond and communicate, *for example, to reach for, grasp or release an object, and to attempt tasks independently*
- adapting equipment, tasks or environments and providing alternative activities where necessary, *for example, simplified text*
- an awareness of the pace at which pupils work and the physical effort required
- a balance of consistency and challenge, according to individual needs.

Pupils with hearing impairment may need:

- a greater emphasis on visual and tactile approaches
- a carefully considered environment in which listening activities can take place, *for example, limited noise levels and background noise for those pupils wearing hearing aids.*

Pupils with visual impairment may need:

- an emphasis on tactile and auditory cues
- activities and objects presented in particular ways, *for example, with a verbal cue, within their visual range; with verbal descriptions of objects and pictures*
- to know who is working within their group
- to be carefully positioned in the group, so that they can make effective use of their vision
- equipment to support access, *for example, appropriate lighting, enlarged or reduced print, tactile books, materials with clear contrasts, equipment to enlarge pictures and texts, the use of objects of reference, specific alternative communication systems such as the use of 'Moon' or Braille*
- a carefully considered environment in which listening takes place, as the auditory input for pupils with visual impairment will have a greater significance, and some pupils may benefit from the use of small enclosed spaces where sounds are enhanced and extraneous noise is reduced.

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 1

All of the English programme of study at key stage 1 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching English at key stage 1 may be on giving pupils opportunities in:

- speaking and listening to:
  - develop their communication skills by building on prior experiences
  - communicate to different listeners and a range of audiences
  - work in small groups and in a class, participating and contributing
  - attend and listen to what others are saying so that they can respond to, and recall, what has been said
  - participate in drama activities, communicating with others in the group, and work in role
- reading to:
  - build on their prior experience of literacy
  - develop their interest and pleasure in reading through learning to focus on objects, pictures, symbols, words and sentences and how they relate to the text
  - access text with support and demonstrate preferences for different types of literature
- writing to:
  - build on prior literacy experiences and write and record in a variety of ways
  - enjoy and understand the value of recording and writing
  - differentiate between print and pictures
  - understand the connections between speech and writing
  - communicate meaning in narrative and non-fiction texts, *for example, writing shared stories and lists*
  - learn the sounds and names of letters and how to write them.

Given these opportunities in English at key stage 1:

**all** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities) have opportunities to respond to their immediate environment, social routines and experiences. They may express likes and dislikes through facial expression, communicative movements and gestures, and may interact with familiar adults. They listen and attend to a variety of sounds and sensory experiences and have the opportunity to work one to one, in small groups and as a class. They have opportunities to enjoy and develop an interest in reading and to develop functional fine motor-skills and body awareness. They are encouraged to attend and to participate in telling familiar tales and the re-telling of personal events. They are involved in making simple visual and/or tactile records of familiar people, events and stories.

**most** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject communicate intentionally, either verbally or non-verbally, with adults and peers about their needs and wants. They also communicate feelings, preferences and choices. They draw the attention of others to things in the world that interest them and comment on them. They use a vocabulary that expresses their needs and immediate experiences, for example, the names of familiar people, objects and events. They listen and attend to a variety of sounds and respond to adults and peers. They anticipate familiar routines and have a sense of self and others. They attend to and recognise objects, pictures, photographs, symbols, and some personal words, and understand that these convey a shared common meaning. They match objects, pictures, symbols or words and may identify pictures, symbols and words within a text. With support, they start to make records about people, activities that they have been involved in, stories, and their own ideas. They

develop their manipulation skills, make marks with appropriate media, and/or use ICT to support recording work. Through both structured activities and play, they begin to learn about the enjoyment, value and purposes of writing.

**a few** pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject develop a wider vocabulary and communicate clearly about matters of immediate interest and convey simple meanings to a range of listeners. They may link words, signs or graphic symbols into sentences and listen to others and respond appropriately. They recognise familiar words in simple texts and they may use their knowledge of letters and sound-symbol relationships in order to read words and to establish meaning when reading aloud. They express their responses to poems, stories and non-fiction. They communicate meaning through pictures, letters, simple words and phrases. Some letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated.

Throughout key stage 1, staff can maintain and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding introduced during the foundation stage by applying these in different areas, and introduce new learning.

The following activities demonstrate an integrated approach to the teaching of English, providing opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing.

### A visiting puppet

Provide a visually interesting and noisy puppet, *for example, with a bright jacket, tactile shoes, a hat with a bell on the end and a large bag*. The puppet arrives wrapped in a brightly coloured box complete with bow and a label with the words 'a new friend' on one side and a rhyme on the other. There are also tactile picture cues attached with velcro, *for example, hat, bell and bag*, and the puppet brings the class a present and an activity card, *for example, what the class must do before the next visit*.

**Activities**

The box is waiting for the pupils at the beginning of a session. Staff create suspense about what may be in the box, and the introductory and concluding activities will usually be repeated during each session.

**Introductory activities**

Pupils may be encouraged to:

- communicate about the box and what may be inside it. The box may be placed in different areas of the room for them to find
- open the box and discover what is inside. A rhyme is used for the opening of the box
- introduce themselves to the puppet using 'hello' or a name song
- explore the puppet and its bag by touching its clothes and listening to the sounds that it makes
- explore the present it brings or read the activity cards in its bag.

**Main activities**

Pupils, supported by their peers and staff, may:

- decide what to call the puppet, and write the name on a card. A digital camera is used to photograph the puppet and the teacher reads out the name and matches the photograph to the puppet, both of which are then put in the puppet's bag
- collect photographs and name cards of themselves, staff or family members and make them into a class book
- match, recognise and recall photographs and the names of the puppet, the pupils, staff or family members
- write about themselves and the puppet and add the results to the class book
- collect favourite music or toys and include them in a sensory box.

**Concluding activities**

Pupils may be prompted to:

- put the puppet away when it indicates that it is time to go, *for example, by pointing to the bag*. A rhyme or a goodbye song ends the session

- communicate about the sessions, using photographs and picture cues as prompts.

***Extension activities***

Pupils, supported by their peers and staff, may:

- explore different ways of greeting others, especially unfamiliar adults and pupils
- think of questions to ask the puppet, *for example, Where are you from? How did you get here? Do you have any other friends?*

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 2

All the English programme of study at key stage 2 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching English at key stage 2 may be on giving pupils opportunities in:

- speaking and listening to:
  - develop their communication skills in a range of contexts for different purposes and audiences
  - take varied roles in groups and contribute to situations with different demands
  - attend and respond appropriately to others' understanding and use a developing vocabulary
- reading to:
  - develop their interest in reading material and their ability to access text with or without support
  - reflect on the meaning of what they have read or heard, and demonstrate preferences
- writing to:
  - continue to record and write for a range of different purposes and use writing as a tool to support their work
  - take pleasure in writing for its own sake
  - understand the main rules and conventions of written English, or other communication systems, and start to explore how language can be used to express meanings.



Given these opportunities in English at key stage 2:

**all** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities) are enabled to maintain and develop their communication skills, including listening and attention skills. They are encouraged to interact with a wider range of people, and in a wider range of situations. They are exposed to a range and richness of vocabulary to reflect their extended experiences. They have opportunities to enjoy and develop an interest in reading materials with a widening range of language and content. They are encouraged to listen and to take an active part in story telling of familiar and unfamiliar tales, and re-telling personal events and experiences. They continue to be involved in making simple visual and/or tactile records of different people, events and stories and to have opportunities to develop functional fine motor skills and body awareness.

**most** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject develop an enlarged vocabulary and communicate clearly about matters of immediate interest, conveying simple meanings to a range of listeners. They may link words, signs or graphic symbols into sentences, and listen to others and usually respond appropriately. They recognise pictures, symbols and/or familiar words in simple texts and may use their knowledge of letters and sound-symbol relationships in order to read words with support. They express their likes and dislikes in response to poems, stories and non-fiction. Their writing communicates meaning through pictures, letters, simple words and phrases, using ICT as appropriate, or by an adult acting as a scribe. Some letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated.

a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject begin to show confidence in communication. They may show an awareness of the needs of the listener, and develop a growing vocabulary. They usually listen carefully and respond with increasing appropriateness to what others say. They may be aware that in some situations a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice are used. Their reading of simple texts shows understanding and is generally accurate. They may use more than one strategy, such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual, in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meanings. They express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction, and their writing communicates meaning in both narrative and non-narrative forms, using an appropriate vocabulary. In their reading and writing, pupils may begin to show awareness of how full stops are used. Simple monosyllabic words are often spelt correctly. Some letters are clearly shaped and correctly orientated and/or ICT is used to support the recording and presentation of their work.

Throughout key stage 2, staff can maintain and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding introduced during key stage 1 by applying these in different areas, and introduce new learning.

The following activities demonstrate an integrated approach to the teaching of English, combining speaking and listening and reading and writing.

### The good storyteller

#### *Introductory activities*

Pupils may be encouraged to:

- attend and listen to a story, read with an emphasis on intonation, and use props, music and songs

- respond to the sound, rhythm and mood of the story
- identify and use correct terms about books and print, *for example, book, cover, page, beginning, middle*
- watch videos, drama productions or computer programs of stories
- identify the main characters, *for example, using puppets, laminated pictures, illustrations in books or by matching names to characters*
- use photographs, pictures, symbols and words to sequence the main events in a story.

### **Main activities**

Pupils, supported by their peers and staff in the group, may:

- make a collection of photographs and music that depicts different feelings, and play simple charades to express them, *for example, happy, sad, angry, frightened*, and use music and movement to explore them
- make a collection of descriptive words or symbols for people, places and situations using CD-ROMs and other ICT, and create personal or group word banks
- draw or use collage to illustrate characters, *for example, a poster*, write a caption to accompany their illustration or write character profiles using an appropriate vocabulary
- create their own sensory boxes or make books of familiar stories using basic textual conventions, *for example, cover, author name, title and layout*, and experiment with different ways of presenting their work, *for example, using a computer*
- retell or act out the story using props, picture cues, symbols or puppets, or use a multisensory environment to create experiences from the story, *for example, castle and ball from Cinderella*, or sensory memory boxes associated with an event, *for example, a trip to the seaside – sand, seaweed, train tickets, bucket, spade, ice cream*
- create alternative endings to familiar stories.

**Concluding activities**

Pupils may be prompted to:

- share their work with others in the class, either reading it out themselves or using the computer, a peer or staff
- comment on their own and others' work – communicating what they liked and disliked and suggesting ways that work may be improved.

**Extension activities**

Pupils, supported by their peers and staff, may:

- communicate about something that has happened to their family or in school, *such as a holiday, an unusual or funny incident, a birthday or outing*, using objects, pictures, photographs, symbols or writing frames as a starting point for their work, and plan, draft and revise a piece of writing
- make up a simple story prompted by a collection of interesting items that depict characters and settings, *for example, clothes, fabric, torches, lights and music*. All pupils explore the items; most pupils associate the items with different activities and put them together in a simple story form. Some pupils compose their own stories using the items provided.

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 3

All of the English programme of study at key stages 3 and 4 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching English at key stage 3 may be on giving pupils opportunities in:

- speaking and listening to:
  - communicate effectively with increasing confidence in a variety of contexts
  - participate, contribute and respond appropriately to others in discussions and drama activities
  - take varied roles in group work
- reading to:
  - access a wide range of texts for pleasure and study, working without support wherever possible
  - reflect on the meaning of what they have read or heard and provide reasons for choices and preferences
- writing to:
  - use their recording and writing skills with increasing confidence for a range of purposes and in different styles
  - communicate their thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences
  - use planning, drafting and editing processes to improve their fiction and non-fiction writing.

Given these opportunities in English at key stage 3:

**all** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities) have opportunities to develop, maintain and consolidate their communication skills. They have opportunities to communicate in a wider range of settings, within and outside the school. They continue to have opportunities to enjoy and develop an interest in reading, with experience of a range of texts offering rich and stimulating language for both information and pleasure. They are encouraged to listen and to take an active part in reading activities. They have the opportunity to be involved in making simple visual and/or tactile records which reflect their widening range of experiences. They continue to have opportunities to develop functional fine motor-skills.

**most** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject begin to show confidence in communication, particularly in familiar situations and where topics interest them. On occasion they may show awareness of the needs of the listener. They develop a growing vocabulary and usually listen carefully and respond with increasing appropriateness to what others say. They may begin to use appropriate intonation. Their reading of simple texts shows understanding and accuracy. They may use one or more strategies, such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual, in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meanings. Their writing communicates meaning through pictures, letters, simple words and phrases, through the use of ICT or by an adult acting as a scribe in both narrative and non-narrative forms, using an appropriate vocabulary. In their reading and writing pupils may begin to show awareness of how full stops are used. They may spell simple monosyllabic words correctly. In handwriting, their letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated and/or they use ICT to support the recording and presentation of their work.

a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject communicate confidently in different contexts. In discussion, they may show an understanding of the main points. Through relevant comments and questions, they show that they have listened carefully. They begin to adapt what they say to the needs of the listener, communicating clearly and using repair strategies in conversation. They may begin to be aware of standard English and when it is used. They read simple texts, recognise key points or ideas in the text and may express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems, and non-fiction. They use a number of strategies in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. In their writing a wider vocabulary is used and ideas may be developed in a sequence of sentences demarcated by capital letters and full stops. Monosyllabic words and some polysyllabic words are spelt correctly. In handwriting, letters are accurately formed and consistent in size and/or they use ICT to support the recording and presentation of their work.

Throughout key stage 3, staff can maintain and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding introduced during the earlier stages by applying these in different areas, and introduce new learning.

The following activities demonstrate an integrated approach to the teaching of English, combining speaking and listening and reading and writing.

## Our town

### Activities

The theme is best introduced by planning and making a visit to a town, which involves the group working collaboratively, making decisions about the places to be visited and by whom, the type of information and evidence they need to gather and the routes they will take. This activity needs to be carefully structured by staff, allowing the group to make their own decisions but defining or limiting the options. If small groups are assigned different tasks or roles, they may take on key responsibilities and report back to the whole group about their particular task.

The preparation of a leaflet about places to visit in town will involve a variety of stages.

### Gathering information and evidence

Pupils may:

- go on an organised tourist walk or bus tour around the town
- visit a local library to consult leaflets about local tourist attractions
- take video clips of their visit to the town or use a digital camera to take photographs of key attractions
- plan and conduct a survey of staff and pupils in the school about favourite attractions in town
- watch a tourist video about the town.

### Reviewing and organising information

Pupils may:

- remember and report back to the whole group on places visited, using photographs, video clips and objects, *for example, a bag of fruit bought at an open air market*
- scrutinise published tourist leaflets and make a list of their key features
- present the information to the whole group, *for example, in a simple graph or table*



- decide, as a group, on the audience for their information leaflet and on headings, layout, organisation and sequencing, *for example, starting with a model to adapt or agree on*
- look at digital photographs and decide how many to include.

### ***Presenting information and producing the leaflet***

Pupils may:

- work in small groups on different sections of the leaflet and prepare and type up the information under the agreed headings
- prepare a sensory box to go with the leaflet, *for example, a video of the places described; an audio recording of sound effects; objects to handle; related smells and tastes*
- check and edit each others' work
- present the leaflet or sensory box to another group in the school and help to prepare and plan a further visit.

### ***Extension activities***

Pupils may:

- sequence jumbled versions of simple information texts
- use a word processor to experiment with different fonts for headings
- match words and captions, taken from information leaflets, to pictures, maps or diagrams
- complete simple cloze activities based on information texts
- write lists of tasks to be completed
- prepare feedback to the whole group by rehearsing points with an adult, a friend or in a small group, deciding on the use of prompts to remember key points, *for example, objects, photos, symbols and written lists*
- use a word bank to support descriptions of places visited.

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 4

All of the English programme of study at key stages 3 and 4 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching English at key stage 4 may be on giving pupils opportunities in:

- speaking and listening to:
  - communicate effectively with some flexibility in a variety of contexts, adapting what they say and how they say it to different situations and people including those which require formality
  - comment on contributions they and others have made to discussions and drama activities
  - take leading and other roles in group work
- reading to:
  - continue to access a wide range of texts for pleasure and study, working without support wherever possible
  - develop an awareness and understanding of different layers of meaning in a text, appreciating what is read and providing reasons for choices and preferences
- writing to:
  - continue to use their recording and writing skills with increasing confidence and independence for a range of purposes and in different styles, in preparation for adult life
  - vary sentence structure and word choice.

Given these opportunities in English at key stage 4:

**all** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities) are enabled to develop, maintain and consolidate their communication skills in preparation for adult life. They have opportunities to participate actively and communicate in their school and local community. They continue to have opportunities to enjoy and develop an interest in reading and reading materials appropriate to their age. They continue to be encouraged to listen and take an active part in reading activities and to be involved in making visual and tactile records which reflect their interests and work-related experiences as young people.

**most** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject communicate with increasing confidence in a widening range of familiar contexts. They show awareness of the needs of the listener, communicating clearly, and sometimes using repair strategies in conversation, and adapting what they say. They show they have listened carefully through relevant comments and questions. They may be aware of, and use, different tones of voice and vocabulary appropriate in different situations. They read simple texts, recognise key points or ideas in the text and may express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction. They use a number of strategies in reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. In their writing, a wider vocabulary is used and ideas may be developed in a sequence of sentences, sometimes demarcated by capital letters and full stops.

Monosyllabic words and some polysyllabic words are spelt correctly. In handwriting, letters are accurately formed and consistent in size and/or they use ICT to support the recording and presentation of their work.

**a few** pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject explore and communicate ideas confidently in a range of different contexts. They initiate and participate in discussion, commenting and questioning. They adapt what they say to the needs of the listener, varying the use of vocabulary and the level of detail. They may begin to be aware of standard English and when it is used. They read a range of texts independently, using strategies appropriately to establish meaning. In responding to fiction and non-fiction they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information. They develop their confidence and refine their writing for a range of purposes, for example, lists, stories, letters, instructions and they show some awareness of the reader. Sequences of sentences extend ideas, and words are chosen for variety and interest. The basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct. Spelling is usually accurate, including that of common, polysyllabic words. Punctuation to mark sentences, for example, full stops, capital letters and question marks, is used accurately. Their work is neatly presented using clear handwriting and/or they use ICT effectively to record and present their work.

Throughout key stage 4, staff can maintain and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding introduced during the earlier stages by applying these in different areas, and introduce new learning.

The following activities demonstrate an integrated approach to the teaching of English, combining speaking and listening and reading and writing.

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

### Activities

Pupils may:

- be introduced to themes and events in the play, *for example, through listening to extracts being read aloud, watching videos and live performances, story telling or role play*
- engage in role-play activities linked to the story, *for example, scenarios of the preparations at the palace for the Duke's wedding; Hermia's father's refusal to let her marry the man of her choice; Hermia creeping out of her father's house in the middle of the night to meet Lysander in the wood; the argument between Titania and Oberon; the magic that makes sleeping mortals fall in love with the first 'person' they see when they wake.* All could be developed using a variety of strategies including:
  - the use of simple props and costumes, *for example, hats and head-dresses to denote characters*
  - use of rhyme, *for example, to explore which characters love each other, 'One, two, I love you. Two, three, Do you love me?'*
  - making lists for the wedding
  - miming preparations at the palace, *for example, polishing, cooking, putting on wedding clothes*
  - writing and responding to wedding invitations
  - arguing without words, using percussion instruments

- sequence events using the language of stories, *for example, 'a long time ago', 'in the night', 'suddenly', 'at the end of the story'*
- ask and answer 'what', 'how', 'when' and 'why' questions related to the plot
- retell the story remembering key characters and events, prompted by objects, songs, rhymes, pictures, digital photographs of pupils in role, symbols and words
- read simple extracts from the play in modern English in small groups with adult support
- identify and match objects, pictures, symbols and words linked to the play, *for example, matching characters' names to symbols of 'man' and 'woman'; playing a 'love match' card game; matching the cards of characters who are in love; selecting pictures of characters in a scene.*

***Extension activities***

Pupils may:

- use similar activities to work on a short story or a novel
- listen to, or read extracts from, the original text
- rehearse and perform a scene for an audience.

## Performance descriptions

These performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels, from P1 to P8. The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the national curriculum level descriptions to:

- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long-, medium- and short-term planning
- track linear progress towards attainment at national curriculum level 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across their subjects
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage.

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

Levels P4 to P8 describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject. The descriptions are characteristic of the types of attainment the learners are likely to demonstrate.

### Performance descriptions across subjects

**P1 (i)** Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *for example, startling at sudden noises or movements*. Any participation is fully prompted.

**P1 (ii)** Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *for example, attending briefly to interactions with a familiar person*. They may give intermittent reactions, *for example, sometimes becoming excited in the midst of social activity*.

**P2 (i)** Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *for example, withholding their attention*. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, *for example, smiling at familiar people*. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, *for example, focusing their attention on sensory aspects of stories or rhymes when prompted*.

**P2 (ii)** Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *for example, reaching out to a favourite person*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *for example, vocalising or gesturing in a particular way in response to a favourite visitor*. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, *for example, showing pleasure each time a particular puppet character appears in a poem dramatised with sensory cues*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *for example, taking turns in interactions with a familiar person, imitating actions and facial expressions*.

**P3 (i)** Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, *for example, pointing to key objects or people*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, *for example, reaching out and feeling for objects as tactile cues to events*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, *for example, listening to their own vocalisations*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, *for example, following the sequence of a familiar daily routine and responding appropriately*.

**P3 (ii)** Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, *for example, prompting another person to join in with an interactive sequence*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, *for example, pre-empting sounds or actions in familiar poems*. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, *for example, by nodding or shaking their heads*. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, *for example, turning the pages in a book shared with another person*. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, *for example, bringing an object to an adult in order to request a new activity*.



## Performance descriptions in English

### Speaking

**P4** Pupils repeat, copy and imitate between 10 and 50 single words, signs or phrases or use a repertoire of objects of reference or symbols. They use single words, signs and symbols for familiar objects, *for example, cup, biscuit*, and to communicate about events and feelings, *for example, likes and dislikes*.

**P5** Pupils combine two key ideas or concepts. They combine single words, signs or symbols to communicate meaning to a range of listeners, *for example, 'Mummy gone' or 'more drink'*. They make attempts to repair misunderstandings without changing the words used, *for example, by repeating a word with a different intonation or facial expression*. Pupils use a vocabulary of over 50 words.

**P6** Pupils initiate and maintain short conversations using their preferred medium of communication. They ask simple questions to obtain information, *for example, 'Where's cat?'*. They can use prepositions, such as 'in' or 'on', and pronouns, such as 'my' or 'it', correctly.

**P7** Pupils use phrases with up to three key words, signs or symbols to communicate simple ideas, events or stories to others, *for example, 'I want big chocolate muffin'*. They use regular plurals correctly. They communicate ideas about present, past and future events and experiences, using simple phrases and statements, *for example, 'We going cinema on Friday'*. They contribute appropriately one-to-one and in small group discussions and role play. They use the conjunction 'and' to link ideas or add new information beyond what is asked.

**P8** They link up to four key words, signs or symbols in communicating about their own experiences or in telling familiar stories, both in groups and one-to-one, *for example, 'The hairy giant shouted at Finn'*. They use an extensive vocabulary to convey meaning to the listener. They can use possessives, *for example, 'Johnny's coat'*. They take part in role play with confidence. They use conjunctions that suggest cause, *for example, 'cos,' to link ideas*.

## Listening

**P4** Pupils demonstrate an understanding of at least 50 words, including the names of familiar objects. Pupils respond appropriately to simple requests which contain one key word, sign or symbol in familiar situations, *for example, 'Get your coat', 'Stand up' or 'Clap your hands'.*

**P5** Pupils respond appropriately to questions about familiar or immediate events or experiences, *for example, 'Where is the ball?', 'What are you doing?', 'Is it yellow?'.* They follow requests and instructions containing at least two key words, signs or symbols, *for example, 'Put the spoon in the dish', 'Give the book to Johnny'.*

**P6** Pupils respond to others in group situations, *for example, taking turns appropriately in a game such as 'Pass the parcel'.* They follow requests and instructions with three key words, signs or symbols, *for example, 'Give me the little red book'.*

**P7** Pupils listen, attend to and follow stories for short stretches of time. They follow requests and instructions with four key words, signs or symbols, *for example, 'Get the big book about dinosaurs from the library'.* They attend to, and respond to, questions from adults and their peers about experiences, events and stories, *for example, 'Where has the boy gone?'.*

**P8** Pupils take part in role play with confidence. Pupils listen attentively. They respond appropriately to questions about why or how, *for example, 'Why does a bird make a nest?', 'How do we copy this picture?'.*

## Reading

**P4** Pupils listen and respond to familiar rhymes and stories. They show some understanding of how books work, *for example, turning pages and holding the book the right way up.*

**P5** Pupils select a few words, symbols or pictures with which they are particularly familiar and derive some meaning from text, symbols or pictures presented in a way familiar to them. They match objects to pictures and symbols, *for example, choosing between two symbols to select a drink or seeing a photograph of a child and eye-pointing at the child.* They show curiosity about content at a simple level, *for example, they may answer basic two key-word questions about a story.*

**P6** Pupils select and recognise or read a small number of words or symbols linked to a familiar vocabulary, *for example, name, people, objects or actions.* They match letters and short words.

**P7** Pupils show an interest in the activity of reading. They predict elements of a narrative, *for example, when the adult stops reading, pupils fill in the missing word*. They distinguish between print or symbols and pictures in texts. They understand the conventions of reading, *for example, following text left to right, top to bottom and page following page*. They know that their name is made up of letters.

**P8** Pupils understand that words, symbols and pictures convey meaning. They recognise or read a growing repertoire of familiar words or symbols, including their own names. They recognise at least half the letters of the alphabet by shape, name or sound. They associate sounds with patterns in rhymes, with syllables, and with words or symbols.

## Writing

**P4** Pupils show they understand that marks and symbols convey meaning, *for example, placing photographs or symbols on a timetable or in a sequence*. They make marks or symbols in their preferred mode of communication.

**P5** Pupils produce meaningful marks or symbols associated with their own name or familiar spoken words, actions, images or events, *for example, contributing to records of their own achievements or to books about themselves, their families and interests*. They trace, overwrite or copy shapes and straight line patterns.

**P6** Pupils produce or write their name in letters or symbols. They copy letter forms, *for example, labels and/or captions for pictures or for displays*.

**P7** Pupils group letters and leave spaces between them as though they are writing separate words. They are aware of the sequence of letters, symbols and words, *for example, selecting and linking symbols together, writing their names and one or two other simple words correctly from memory*.

**P8** Pupils show awareness that writing can have a range of purposes, *for example, in relation to letters, lists or stories*. They show understanding of how text is arranged on the page, *for example, by writing or producing letter sequences going from left to right*. They write or use their preferred mode of communication to set down their names with appropriate use of upper- and lower-case letters or appropriate symbols.

## About this publication

### Who's it for?

This handbook is for all those who work with pupils with learning difficulties. This includes pupils who are often described as having severe, profound and multiple, or moderate learning difficulties. The guidance relates to all pupils aged 5 to 16 who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4.

### What's it about?

It provides support materials to schools for planning learning opportunities and activities in English for pupils in each key stage. It includes performance descriptions of early learning and attainment in the national curriculum.

### What's it for?

It will be useful in developing an inclusive curriculum. It can be used in mainstream schools, special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It can also support the range of services that work with pupils with learning difficulties.

### Related material

This handbook is part of a set of guidance on planning and teaching the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. The entire set, which includes general guidance, guidance on developing skills and subject guidance, can be found on the QCA website at [www.qca.org.uk/ld](http://www.qca.org.uk/ld).

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